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GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

What is Public Relations?

Public relations is more than getting an interview in your local newspaper or on your local television, radio, or cable station. It encompasses all communication vehicles used by your local PTA. Public relations includes fliers, brochures, use of PTA websites, use of social media, email, PTA speakers, exhibits, your reputation in the community, and communications among PTA members, as well as a presence in the media.

Public relations can help you attract new members, increase meeting attendance, and public awareness to your PTA programs, events, and activities. It should be an integral part of all your PTA efforts.

First Steps in Planning Your Public Relations Campaign

Before beginning to plan your PTA campaign, take a few moments to develop a file of basic PTA resources. This will help you organize the many PR activities you will undertake, and it can be used as a preliminary evaluation tool of your PR efforts.

Learn all you can about the PTA - its goals, mission statement, programs, policies, and activities on the local, state, and national levels. Take a few moments to familiarize yourself with National PTA publications, such as *Our Children* magazine, National Standards for Family-School Partnerships, and the Utah PTA Public Relations Web page.

Develop a list of PTA leaders who can speak for the organization. Make sure you have the names and telephone numbers of all the PTA officers. Keep information on your PTA and its activities close at hand so that you can always answer questions. Seek options of communication with all your parents.

Remember your school is unique. You have your own message and programs to broadcast that meet the needs at your school. Make sure that all your parents are hearing the message.

Check Your Internal Public Relations

Your communication with parents at your school and members of the PTA is equally as important as working with members of the community and media. Good internal public relations needs to be more than word of mouth. What tools are in your public relations tool kit? How will you communicate with the members? Utilize social media, websites, newsletters, emails, face to face, text messages, and phone calls.



BRANDING

It is important to use the PTA brand and tag line "every child. one voice." Putting the PTA brand on all info that goes out to the members and the community will bring recognition.

Newsletters

Be sure that your newsletter is identified as a PTA newsletter. Use the full name of the PTA. List the complete address and issue date. Type and duplicate your newsletter neatly, always include a PTA contact name and phone number. Use the PTA logo.

Establish a schedule for the newsletter and get it out on time.

Keep articles simple and short. Try to include articles that cater to the interest of your members. Proofread the copy carefully with several sets of eyes.

Encourage the PTA president and school principal to contribute articles for the newsletter.

Information topics for articles that could be included in your newsletters could include:

- ♦ PTA news and activities
- ♦ School news and activities
- ♦ Honors and awards of students and teachers
- ♦ Health information from the school nurse or Health Commissioner
- ♦ Upcoming meeting information
- ♦ Current PTA projects
- ♦ Calendars
- ♦ School lunch menus
- ♦ PTA and school budgets
- ♦ Proposed changes in the curriculum
- ♦ Changes in school board policy
- ♦ Publicize local, council, region, state, and National PTA information
- ♦ Include local and Utah PTA websites (utahpta.org) and encourage their use
- ♦ Information from your commissioners
- ♦ Legislative information pertaining to educational issues
- ♦ Always include information on how to join PTA and how to help at the school as a volunteer
- ♦ Resources for parents on various topics
- ♦ Messages from the principal and PTA president
- ♦ Community partnerships



PLANNING A SUCCESSFUL PR CAMPAIGN

Here are five easy steps to help you achieve your public relations goals:

1. Set realistic, measurable goals. Put these goals in writing. For example, you might want to attract 50 parents to a PTA meeting or increase Reflections entries by 10%.
2. Decide who you want to reach: PTA members, parents of all the students at the school, teachers and administrators, and community leaders. How will you reach them? Media, fliers, newsletters, community posters, email, and websites.
3. Develop a timetable for contacting the media. Know media deadlines and reporters who might be interested. This is where your carefully crafted media list comes into the plan.
4. Delegate responsibility. Form a Public Relationship Committee. Since no one can do it alone, ask others for assistance.
5. Use a formal evaluation tool for your public relations report.

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

First, you must realize that you can't control the media. While you can send them materials and ideas, they will decide whether and how they will be used. You can increase your chances of success by knowing what types of stories will interest different media representatives and how to contact them. Most of the news media is available via Twitter. It is suggested that you have a Twitter account and follow the press and they may follow you back.

Develop a nose for news. Before contacting the media, determine whether your story idea is news—not all PTA activities are. Learn what's considered newsworthy by studying local newspapers and broadcast media. Determine what they consider newsworthy and how they present a story. Google alerts via email are a great tool to use to access stories that will be of interest to your PTA.

Use your media list. It will help you determine what reporter or editor should be notified about a PTA event. A general meeting may be listed in the community calendar section or on their website but will not be considered news. However, if your PTA is addressing an issue of vital interest to the community, a media outlet may send a reporter or ask for a follow up interview.

Look for photo opportunities. Most news outlets are using more photographs. Ask your local newspaper to send a photographer. You may also take your own photographs or video and send them to the news outlets immediately after the event. The news outlets are cutting back on personnel and cannot be everywhere across the state. We are finding that we have had news stories covered by sending the news outlets our own pictures and other material. Make sure you send detailed information with any picture or video that you send them and complete contact information so that they can do a follow up interview for the story. Be sure your photos and videos show action and activity and not just people smiling and shaking hands. Contact more than one media source for coverage of your story idea.



Use media community calendars to advertise PTA events. These calendars can easily be accessed on the different media websites.

Be selective about your story ideas you send to your local media. If you bombard the media with media releases about stories that are not news, editors may begin to ignore all communications from your PTA.

Media (Press) Releases

All PTAs should send out media releases. Send the media release to a specific media representative one week prior to the event. Attach any brochures or other material related to the event. If possible, limit the release to one page. A release is designed to spark interest, not tell the whole story. Call the reporter or editor to see if the release was received and offer to provide additional information before, during, and after the event.

How well the media release is written is almost as important as the information it contains. The most important information comes first, with less important details in later paragraphs.

Be sure to include the following in all media releases:

1. Who, what, when, where, and how. Cover these points early in the release.
2. Be brief. Keep the releases short using simple language and sentences.
3. Double-space. Leave at least one inch margins on all sides.
4. Avoid editorializing. Just state the facts. Tell it like it is.
5. Use only formal titles, not common titles. On second mention, refer to both men and women by their last names.
6. Proofread. Check and double-check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Writing Media (Press) Releases

1. A heading stating MEDIA RELEASE, name of the PTA, and school address.
2. FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE or FOR RELEASE ON. The media release should be typed in capital letters upper right portion of the page. Directly below these words indicate the date for release.
3. A contact person. A name with a daytime telephone number should be included near the top of the page so reporters can call for additional information.
4. A short headline. A title with capital letters (example: PTA PRESIDENT ELECTED) that gives a quick preview of the contents of the release.
5. A dateline. This is the city (City, UT) from which the release is issued. Place this at the beginning of the first paragraph.
6. Use the PTA logo
7. End marks. If the release is more than one page, place the page number and release headline at the top of both pages (example: Page 2 - PTA President Elected).
8. At the end of the release, put ### marks centered after the last paragraph to let readers know the release ends.



Sample Media Release

Utah PTA
5192 South Greenpine Dr.
Salt Lake City, UT 84123
801-261-3100
utahpta.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Jan 27, 2023

Utah PTA is proud to report to the Governor and Legislature that Utah PTA supports Utah communities, schools and children.

The value of the Utah PTA Volunteer Hours for February 2023 through January 2024 is based on the average estimated value of volunteer time nationally for 2022 which was \$29.95 per hour as determined by the “Independent Sector’s Value of Volunteer Time.”

The estimate helps acknowledge the army of PTA volunteers who dedicate their time, talents, and energy to making a difference in our communities, our schools, and to making a difference in the lives of children.

Utah PTA receives reports three times annually from the PTA local schools, council PTAs, region PTAs and state PTA volunteer giving the hours donated by all volunteers throughout the state:

The schools, councils, region, and state volunteers who reported hours from February 2022 – January 2023 totaled 735,543 hours. Based on the 2022 estimated value of volunteer time the total donated time at \$29.95 per hour is \$22,029,512.85.

We hope that all Legislators will acknowledge the work done by the PTAs and parents in their communities.

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Preparing for Interviews

Preparation is the key to a successful interview. Prepare and practice ahead of time, if possible.

Before the interview find out the following:

- ♦ The names of the reporter and the cameraman.
- ♦ Length of the interview.
- ♦ Topic to be covered.
- ♦ Will other guests be there? Who? Do your homework.
- ♦ Physical setting; for example, will you be sitting at a table, standing, etc.?
- ♦ For broadcast interviews, will it be live or taped?
- ♦ When the interview will be printed or broadcast?
- ♦ Do we need pictures sent in and our PTA logo?

It is often said that public relations is the job of everyone in PTA. This is definitely a true concept since public relations is the crucial part of marketing your PTA and your PTA programs. Good public relations practices will help you in attracting support and volunteers to join your mission and goals for your PTA. Every PTA should have public relations position on their board.

The public relations individual will work closely with the PTA president and the PTA board to guide and direct the Public Relations Committee in creating and implementing a successful public relations and membership campaign based on the needs assessments and goals determined by the PTA board.

The Public Relations Committee establishes the public relations goals for the PTA for the current school year and in coordination with the Membership Chair implements the membership campaign and evaluates its success. The elected public relations individual serves as the head of the Public Relations Committee. As the chair of the committee it is expected that the responsibilities will include obtaining public relations plans from each member of the board who is in charge of a specific program or event for the PTA. This would include things such as the membership campaign, PTA sponsored meetings, Reflections program, carnivals, Red Ribbon week, book fairs, and any other PTA activity. The Public Relations Chair and committee may help these board members in creating their public relations plan for the year. The Public Relations Committee will establish a public relations time line for implementing its membership campaign for the year.

The Membership Chair would serve on the Public Relations Committee. The public relations plan should be based on input from the president, the PTA board, Membership Chair, and commissioners, as well as needs assessments from your PTA membership. The Public Relations Committee should be proactive in communication of events and programs throughout the year. Social media is a great tool to get the word out for the events and programs.



RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS POSITION

1. Be a PTA member and serve your full term as elected by the PTA membership or appointed by the PTA officers.
2. Learn and know all you can about the PTA—its history, goals, programs, policies, PTA Day at the Capitol, activities, publications, websites, social media involvement, and meetings.
3. Consult the Utah PTA communications web page for information about how to perform your public relations duties
4. Act as an aide to the president and perform such duties as delegated or assigned by the PTA officers or president.
5. Work closely with the PTA president and Membership Chair and assist board members to promote events.
6. Submit to the PTA officers a recommended budget to cover costs of the Public Relations Committee's projected campaign and plans for the year.
7. Attend all scheduled PTA board and committee meetings, Utah PTA conventions, and outreach training meetings.
8. Know and work with your council, region, and Utah PTA public relations.
9. Form and chair the Public Relations Committee. Elect a vice chair and secretary for the Public Relations Committee. Meet regularly and delegate responsibility as you facilitate, lead, supervise, and coordinate the work of that committee in publicizing your PTA/PTSA programs and activities.
10. Present recommendations for Public Relations Committee to the PTA board.
11. In partnership with the Public Relations Committee, develop and implement a successful public relations membership campaign for your PTA for the current school year.
12. Keep informed of all activities and programs of your PTA.
13. Plan and carry out PTA Founder's Day activities and celebration in February.
14. Take every opportunity to publicize and spotlight what your PTA is doing.
15. Serve as a liaison between your PTA and the media.
16. Write and submit media releases to the president to be checked before releasing to the media.
17. Send pictures of your PTA events to Utah PTA to show on the website and social media.
18. Evaluate public relations campaign and report to PTA president and Executive Committee.
19. Collect volunteer hours of members and consultants serving on the Public Relations Committee and report them at each PTA board meeting.
20. Guarantee that recognitions are acknowledged and thank you notes are sent.
21. Maintain all PTA social media accounts.
22. With the help of the Public Relations Committee, create marketing displays to use at meetings and events.



Files and Procedure Books Should Include:

- ◆ Contact information of the Public Relations Committee (complete with names, addresses, phone numbers, and email).
- ◆ Copies of Public Relations Committee budget information.
- ◆ Public Relations campaign plans.
- ◆ Samples of all internal publicity.
- ◆ Copies of all press releases, fliers, and information used for events.
- ◆ Pictures of displays, exhibits, or bulletin boards used for public relations.
- ◆ Utah PTA logo and school PTA logo.
- ◆ Social media passwords and log in information.
- ◆ Media contacts including all contact information.
- ◆ Contact information for any press, community leaders, and organizations used for public relations.

Forming a Public Relations Committee:

1. Committee Size

- ◆ Size varies depending on the size of your PTA, publicity channels, and needs of the local, council, region, or Utah PTA.
- ◆ A successful Public Relations Committee is not a committee of one.
- ◆ Most Public Relations Committees include from four to eight regular members.

2. Committee Composition

- ◆ The Public Relations Committee Chair will be the elected public relations representative.
- ◆ A local PTA public relations representative should include parents, teachers, principal, and the PTA president.
- ◆ Local PTSA committees should include at least one student.
- ◆ The membership representative should be included.
- ◆ Community liaisons and consultants may be asked to be a part of your Public Relations Committee.

PTA FOUNDERS DAY—FEBRUARY 17

Announce PTA Founders Day in newsletters, social media, and any other communications.



SOCIAL MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Social Media should be one of your primary sources of information sharing. Corporations, small businesses, government entities, charities, and all community organizations recognize and use social media in ever increasing ways. Use of social media to get messages out is immediate and far reaching and allows for input and interaction of your audiences. The benefits are significant. As you decide to use social media, there are a few things to consider.

Facebook

Like us on Facebook! Encourage your parents to like Utah PTA on Facebook and then link your Facebook page to the Utah PTA and National Facebook pages so that you are delivering information from their pages to your membership. This will make sure that all resources are available to every PTA member. Also, join us at Utah PTA Excellent Elementary and Utah PTA Super Secondary Facebook pages. We also have an Advocacy Group, Treasurer's Group, a Utah School Community Council Group, and a Reflections group that you can join. Groups are a great resource to learn from many other PTA leaders from all over Utah.

Twitter

Follow us on Twitter: remind your PTA members to follow Utah PTA on Twitter to get important up to date information. We will be using this in increasing ways during the legislative session to let members know about important legislation. Many of the Utah Legislators follow Utah PTA on Twitter and we get their posts. This is also a great way to remind members about deadlines and events. Twitter is an important way to discuss topics and get information out fast. Follow Utah PTA on Twitter: @UtahPTAOneVoice.

Pinterest

This is a great way to share ideas for PTA parents, volunteers, and teachers. Join us on Pinterest today. It is easy to get started. Just go to the Pinterest site, sign up to be a member, and then follow Utah PTA. If you click on “about,” which is on the Pinterest header, and then the help button, it will give you a tutorial of how to use Pinterest. We welcome your ideas for us to use on Pinterest. Follow Utah PTA on Pinterest [Pinterest.com/UtahPTA](https://www.pinterest.com/UtahPTA).

Instagram

Utah PTA is also on Instagram. Follow us and we will follow back. A picture is worth a thousand words! We would love to see your pictures and we will be sharing our pictures. This is a great way to document your events, meetings, carnivals, ribbon weeks, Reflections, and Battle of the Bands! We hope to see you in the PICS. Follow us at Utah PTA.

YouTube

Utah PTA is also on YouTube. Please subscribe to UtahPTA One Voice to watch videos from Utah PTA.



UTAH PTA SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The Purpose of Social Media is to:

- ◆ Promote PTA, membership, or PTA events
- ◆ Direct traffic to the PTA website for more information, encouraging participation and membership
- ◆ Promote best practices
- ◆ Provide accurate, relevant, and up-to-date information

Content

The Utah PTA Executive Committee shall approve the site and assign the responsibility for monitoring content. Passwords must be given to three board members. Content on all social media outlets used by the PTA shall:

- ◆ Be civil, cordial, and relevant
- ◆ Be welcoming to all families
- ◆ Not use explicit or profane language and acronyms of explicit expressions
- ◆ Not use offensive language, including but not limited to ethnic, religious, and racial slurs
- ◆ Not air grievances with PTA, school board members, school administrators, teachers, PTA members, students, or other individuals
- ◆ Not further an issue or product for personal or professional gain
- ◆ Not include documents that are for members only, such as bylaws, minutes, and financials, unless access is protected and available only to members of this PTA
- ◆ Not endorse, promote, or solicit on behalf of a business, product, or service
- ◆ Not endorse a candidate or political party
- ◆ Not include comments and posts intended as advertising
- ◆ Be verified for access
- ◆ Obtain permission from individuals prior to posting photographs and videos
- ◆ Know individual school district policy for social media use

Check with the school district's communications administrator for the guidelines on the photo release policy, or obtain a signed photo release through the PTA before publishing any photo or video.

Notice

Utah PTA and its locals, councils, and regions are encouraged to post the following information on their social media site so visitors are aware of the expectations.

_____ PTA is a noncommercial, nonsectarian, nonpartisan association that does not endorse any candidate or political party. This PTA does not endorse non-PTA products or services.

- ◆ Solicitation, or anything that resembles solicitation, shall not be posted on this site. If complaints are received about content or if the PTA deems content to be advertising, that content will be removed regardless of whether the content is relevant to our members.
- ◆ Offensive or inappropriate content will not be tolerated and will be removed and author will be banned from the site.
- ◆ Posts endorsing candidate for office or any political party shall be removed immediately.

This site is not the appropriate place to express complaints and grievances. If you have a concern please contact a member of the Utah PTA Executive Committee.



Dear Scholarship Applicant,

PTA is the largest for child advocacy voice in the state of Utah. PTA works directly for children and advocates for them with local, state, and national governments.

In helping every child achieve their goal for higher education, it is the pleasure of Utah PTA to be able to offer four \$1,000 scholarships.

Utah PTA offers these scholarships to support students focused on a career goal. Utah PTA supports education and believes strongly in post high school education.

All eligible students are encouraged to apply for this opportunity from Utah PTA.

Sincerely,



Corey Fairholm
Utah PTA President

UTAH PTA/PTSA STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

Information

Application Due to the Utah PTA by March 1, 2024.

Utah PTA supports public education. Utah PTA believes that all students have the right to an education at a public school. A student who desires to further their education in an institute of higher learning or technical school following their graduation should have the opportunity to do so. We realize that for students to further their education it requires funding. It is our privilege and honor to give \$1,000 scholarships to four Utah seniors. Utah PTA would encourage students who are seniors to apply for this scholarship. The Scholarship Application is an online form that can be found at: UtahPTA.org/Student-Scholarship-Application

The application must be completed in one setting. It cannot be saved and finished later. Please see what needs to be completed below:

Qualifications:

1. Applicant must be graduating from high school in the current school year.
2. Applicant must be accepted to a college, university, or vocational school.
3. Applicant must be a current PTSA/PTA member.
4. Applicant must have at least 3.0 cumulative GPA.
5. Applicant must fully complete the application with requested attachments.
6. Scholarship must be used within one year. (Deferred admissions accepted.)
7. Applicants may receive only one (total) scholarship from Utah PTA, including all of its programs. Winners of this scholarship will be ineligible to receive additional leadership scholarships, etc. from Utah PTA.
8. Winning applicants will be required to supply Utah PTA with their university ID, student number, or social security number for correct payment to their student account at the designated school.

Please Include With This Application:

Be prepared to submit:

- A. Two letters of recommendation describing your character and qualities developed during your school years from teachers, leaders, coaches, etc.
- B. Please be prepared to answer the following essay questions. There is a limit of 250 words for each answer.
 - ♦ Question 1) How has your participation in PTSA impacted your life? How has it made a difference at your high school?
 - ♦ Question 2) Describe a time in your life when things did not go the way you planned. How did you respond? Or, describe a challenge you have experienced and how you overcame it.
 - ♦ Question 3) Where do you see yourself in five years?
 - ♦ Question 4) If you could change one thing, whether about the world or about yourself, what would it be? How do you plan to use your post-secondary education in this endeavor?
- C. A PDF copy of your official high school transcript.
- D. A PDF copy of your resume that includes extracurricular activities, humanitarian efforts, PTSA involvement, work experience.

